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October 6, 2010

Mr. Paul Gessing
5500 Benson Court NW
Albuquerque, NM 87120-3222

Dear Mr. Gessing,

During the last year and a half, I have worked hard to create jobs, support our small businesses, and strengthen our economy. During that time, you have contacted me to express your concern regarding Cost of Living Adjustments (COLA) for Social Security beneficiaries.

Like you, I believe the best ideas do not come from Washington, but from caring, thoughtful people who take the time to participate in the democratic process and ensure their representatives are listening. I have heard your concerns and want to take this opportunity to update you on my efforts to ensure seniors are treated fairly.

Last year, due to the contraction of the economy and the negative inflation rate, no COLA was provided to Social Security beneficiaries. On October 15, 2010, the Social Security Administration is expected to announce that 2011 will be the second consecutive year without a COLA. Many New Mexican seniors struggle to buy medications and pay their energy bills because their living costs are rising even though there was no Social Security COLA. Therefore, I am a proud cosponsor of H.R. 5987, the Seniors Protection Act of 2010, which will provide seniors, retired and disabled veterans, and disabled individuals with a \$250 one-time payment to assist with their expenses if there is no COLA in 2011.

Our hard working seniors deserve to retire with dignity and security. The Social Security COLA, which is based on a Consumer Price Index (CPI) measurement for inflation, is supposed to help seniors and other social security beneficiaries maintain their purchasing power for basic necessities such as medical care, housing, energy, and food. While economy-wide indicators of inflation like CPI have shown no net increase, Medicare premiums and other health care costs have increased even while seniors' other sources of income, such as IRAs, lost significant value during the economic downturn. Therefore, the lack of a Social Security COLA left many seniors struggling to make ends meet.

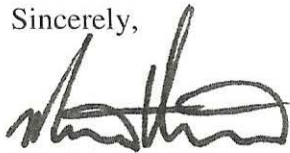
This is why I support legislation like H.R. 5987, which authorizes a one-time, \$250 payment to seniors if there is no COLA in 2011. This is also part of the reason I

supported H.R. 1, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Recovery Act), which provided Social Security beneficiaries with a \$250 one-time payment for 2010. President Barack Obama signed the Recovery Act into law on February 17, 2009.

Again, thank you for sharing your ideas, concerns, and suggestions during the last year and a half. It is important to maintain this dialog and I hope you will continue to share your views with me. For more information and additional details about legislation, please visit my website, <http://heinrich.house.gov>. While you are there, you can also sign up to receive periodic updates on my work in Congress.

It is an honor to serve you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Martin Heinrich', written in a cursive style.

Martin Heinrich
Member of Congress

MH/an